2006 CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

Wildlife Habitat Assessment Worksheet for Tier III CROPLAND (including hay in rotation)			
Applicant:		**Scored by:**	
Farm/Tract No.:		**Reviewed by:**	
Field No(s):		**Date:**	

INSTRUCTIONS

Use this habitat assessment on offered fields that are used for annual row crops (corn, soybeans, small grains, vegetables), orchards, and hay as part of a crop rotation. For each resource component listed, review the conditions in each field that is offered for CSP. Fields with the same crop rotation and management practices can be grouped together as a conservation treatment unit (CTU) for habitat evaluation. To qualify for a wildlife enhancement payment, the field/CTU must meet the minimum point requirements for each of the resource components listed, and have a total habitat assessment score that is greater than 0.50.

Factors that impact wildlife habitat are plant diversity, summer food sources, nesting and protective cover on field edges, and availability of food and cover during the winter. Undisturbed vegetative cover that is adjacent to crop fields is especially important. Native plants and most weeds provide wildlife food. Introduced plants include grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, most fescues, orchardgrass, timothy, and ryegrass, and legumes such as red, white, or ladino clover.

The crop rotation evaluated does not have to match the order listed, but should contain all elements listed. Residue management reflects the importance of grain and crop residue that remains on the soil surface over winter. Crop management primarily indicates amount of food sources, both in summer and winter.

RESOURCE COMPONENTS FOR CROPLAND HABITAT	Available Points	Minimum Score Required	Score for Existing Habitat	Score for Planned Habitat
A. Crop Rotation				
1. Row crops or small grain, with hay: Maximum 67% row crops in any year	10	1		
2. Row crops-fallow: Minimum 25% fallow in any year	7			
3. Row crops-small grain: Maximum 667% row crops in any year	5			
4. Continuous row crops (no small grain or hay)	1			
B. Over-Winter Cropland Cover				
1. Over-winter crop residue >50% (cropping system with no fall tillage)	10	3		
2. Over-winter crop residue 10-50% (e.g., corn - double-crop SG/SB), with small grain planted by Oct. 15th each year	7			
3. Over-winter crop residue 10-50%	5			
4. Over-winter crop residue <10% (e.g., vegetables), with a fall cover crop	3			
5. Over-winter crop residue <10% (e.g., vegetables), no fall cover crop	1			
C. Non-Cropland Vegetative Cover				
What percentage of the field perimeter has a field edge border (herbaceous field border and/or filter strip) or non-cropped area (tidal or non-tidal wetland, and/or herbaceous idle area) adjacent to the offered field(s)? Buffers and other non-cropped areas must meet the following criteria to qualify as "wildlife friendly": • at least 30 feet wide for minimum points in each category, at least 50 feet wide for maximum points. • not mowed, grazed, or significantly disturbed by human activities during the nesting seasn (April 15 to July 15). Significant disturbance includes use for farm lanes and for recreation with 4-wheelers and dirt bikes.				
1. 75-100% of the field perimeter has a buffer or adjacent non-cropped area	15 - 25	10		
2. 50-74% of the field perimeter has a buffer or adjacent non-cropped area	10 - 15			
3. 25-49% of the field perimeter has a buffer or adjacent non-cropped area	5 - 10			
4. <25% of the field perimeter has a buffer or adjacent non-cropped area	1			

D. Plant Composition of Non-Cropland Vegetative Cover				
1. All field borders and other non-cropped areas contain a mix of predominantly native species (trees, shrubs, grasses, and/or forbs). Herbaceous volunteer "weeds," if present, will be considered in this category. Less than 10% of the cover is invasive exotic species.	25	10		
2. At least half of the field borders and other non-cropped areas contain a mix of predominantly native species, including herbaceous "weeds" (if present). The remainder of the field borders and other non-cropped areas contain a mix of planted introduced species, with <30% tall fescue. Less than 25% of the cover is invasive exotic species.	17			
3. Most of the buffers and other non-cropped areas contain a mix of predominantly planted introduced species, with <50% tall fescue. Less than 25% of the cover is invasive exotic species.	12			
4. Most of the field borders and other non-cropped areas are predominantly tall fescue, invasive exotic species, or no field borders/non-cropped areas are present.	1			
E. Distance to Nesting and/or Protective Cover				
What is the minimum distance, measured from the center of the field, to the nearest wildlife cover habitat? Wildlife cover can include woodlands, wetlands, shrubby idle areas, hedgerows, and habitat buffers on the offered land.				
1. <100 feet	10	1		
2. 100 – 329 feet	7			
3. 330 – 660 feet	5			
4. >660 feet	1			
(A) Total Cropland Habitat Points	Max 80			
(B) Cropland Habitat Score (Total Points/80)	Max 1.0			
F. Bonus Points				
Offers that fall below 0.5 have the opportunity to raise their scores and qualify for Tier III in future years by either improving their score in any of the sections A through E; or by receiving 10 bonus points for doing one of the following activities:				
• Plant food plots annually of at least 0.5 acres in size adjacent to existing herbaceous cover; OR		check box if selected		
• Maintaining existing perennial pollinator habitat of at least 0.5 acres on the farm.		check box if selected		
			Score for Existing Habitat	**Score for Planned Habitat**
(C) Total Cropland Habitat Points with Bonus	Max 90			
(D) Future Cropland Habitat Score (Total w/bonus /90)	Max 1.0			

Evaluated fields meet Tier III criteria **Y or N** | **in what year?**